

**A. TIME LIMITS**

Effective June 1, 2002

**WAC 388-484-0005 There is a five year (sixty-month) time limit for TANF, SFA and GA-S cash assistance.****(1) What is the sixty-month time limit?**

- (a) You can receive cash assistance for temporary assistance for needy families (TANF), state family assistance (SFA), and general assistance for pregnant women (GA-S) for a lifetime limit of sixty months. The time limit applies to any combination of these programs, whether or not it was received in consecutive months.
- (b) If you receive cash assistance for part of the month, it counts as a whole month against the time limit
- (c) If you have received cash assistance from another state on or after August 1, 1997, and it was paid for with federal TANF funds, those months will count against your time limit.
- (d) The time limit does not apply to diversion cash assistance, support services, food assistance or Medicaid.

**(2) When does the sixty-month time limit start?**

The sixty-month time limit applies to cash assistance received on or after August 1, 1997 for TANF and SFA. Although the FA-S program no longer exists, the time limit applies to FA-S cash assistance received from May 1, 1999 through July 31, 1999.

**(3) Does the time limit apply to me?**

The sixty-month time limit applies to you for any month in which you are a parent or other relative as defined in WAC 388-454-0010, or a minor parent emancipated through court order or marriage.

**(4) Do any exceptions to the time limits apply to me?**

The department does not count months of assistance towards the sixty-month limit if you are:

- (a) A nonneedy adult caretaker relative who is not a member of the assistance unit and you are receiving cash assistance on behalf of a child;
- (b) An unemancipated pregnant or parenting minor living in a department approved living arrangement as defined by WAC 388-486-0005; or
- (c) An American Indian or Native Alaskan adult and you are living in Indian country, as defined under 18 U.S.C. 1151, or an Alaskan Native village and you are receiving TANF, SFA, or GA-S cash assistance during a period when at least fifty percent of the adults living in Indian country or in the village were not employed. See WAC 388-484-0010.

**(5) What happens if a member of my assistance unit has received sixty-months of TANF, SFA, and GA-S cash benefits?**

Once any adult or emancipated minor in the assistance unit has received sixty months of cash assistance, the entire assistance unit becomes ineligible for TANF or SFA cash assistance, unless you are eligible for an extended period of cash assistance called a TANF/SFA time limit extension under WAC 388-484-0006.

**(6) What can I do if I disagree with how the department has counted my months of cash assistance?**

- (a) If you disagree with how the department has counted your months of cash assistance, you may ask for a hearing within ninety days of receiving notice of the count.
- (b) If your cash assistance is terminated after sixty months and you ask for a hearing as provided under chapter 388-02 WAC, your cash assistance will be continued during the course of your initial administrative appeal. You may be required to repay up to sixty days of cash if the department's decision is found to be correct, as described in WAC 388-410-0001(3)(b).

**CLARIFYING INFORMATION****1. Start date for TANF time limits:**

TANF time limits started in Washington State on August 1, 1997. Since we started time limits on this date, we do not count TANF benefits a client received in another state before August 1997 toward the client's 60-month limit, even if the other state started TANF time limits at an earlier date.

**2. Benefits that do not count toward the time limit:**

We don't count a month toward a client's sixty-month limit if they did not get TANF/SFA or GA-S cash benefits. Types of assistance that don't count toward the client's limit include:

- a. Diversion Cash Assistance;
- b. WorkFirst Support services;
- c. Medical Assistance; or
- d. Food Assistance.

**3. Extending TANF/SFA due to hardship (20% extension):**

Federal and state laws allow us to extend up to 20% of the TANF caseload beyond sixty months due to hardship. We don't extend a client's benefits until they have reached their 60-month limit. We will implement the 20% extension policy when the first clients reach their time limit - August 2002. This is covered in Section B – Time Limit Extensions under WAC 388-484-0006.

**WORKER RESPONSIBILITIES****When a Client Received TANF in Another State**

1. Call the other state's TANF agency to verify:
  - a. The period of time the adult client(s) received TANF since August 1, 1997; and

- b. How many months count toward the federal 60-month time limit for TANF. Reasons why a state may not count months toward the federal 60-month time limit include:
  - (1) The client meets the state's Indian county disregard;
  - (2) The state has a waiver; or
  - (3) The client was exempt from time limits (the clock was stopped) because assistance received by the client was 100% state funded.
- 2. Don't count any months of TANF the client received before August 1997, even if the other state started time limits before this date.
- 3. Document the contact you made with the other state agency in the remarks section of the adult client's TICS screen. Include the following information:
  - a. Name, title, and phone number of the agency representative;
  - b. The period of time the adult client(s) received TANF since August 1, 1997;
  - c. How many months of countable TANF assistance the client(s) received; and
  - d. If any months are not countable, the reason we don't count the assistance.